

# What Do You Take From The "Golden Mean" of Aristotle?

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In Book II of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle identifies a number of virtues by name: "[Virtue] is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defects [...] With regard to feelings of fear and confidence **courage** is the mean; of the people who exceed, he who exceeds in fearlessness has no name (many of the states have no name), while the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, and he who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward. With regard to pleasures and pains [...] the mean is **temperance**, the excess self-indulgence. [...] With regard to giving and taking of money the mean is **liberality**, the excess and the defect prodigality and meanness. [...] With regard to honour and dishonour the mean is **proper pride**, the excess is known as a sort of 'empty vanity', and the deficiency is undue humility [...] With regard to anger also there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean [...] let us call the mean **good temper**; [...] With regard to truth, then, the intermediate is a truthful sort of person and the mean may be called **truthfulness** [...] With regard to pleasantness in the giving of amusement the intermediate person is ready-witted and the disposition **ready wit** [...] With regard to the remaining kind of pleasantness, that which is exhibited in life in general, the man who is pleasant in the right way is friendly and the mean is **friendliness** [...] he who falls short or is not ashamed of anything at all is shameless, and the intermediate person is modest. **Righteous indignation** is a mean between envy and spite" (1107a - 1108b)

Temperance, Liberality, Proper Pride, Good Temper, Truthfulness, Ready Wit, Friendliness, and Righteous Indignation are **always** virtues for Aristotle, even if adherence to those virtues leads to evil consequences.